Indo-Nepal-Tibet border as Lipulekh pass being entry point into China from India;

(b) what steps have been taken at diplomatic and political level to resolve this dispute and whether there are any other such, claims made by Nepal in the recent past; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the Nepalese claim is not linked to the Lipulekh pass being the entry point into China, but on account of a difference in perception of the boundary alignment in the western sector of the India-Nepal border, where the Kalapani area is located.

(b) and (c) During the visit of Prime Minister of Nepal in June 1997, both Governments decided to refer the matter to the India-Nepal Joint Working Group (JWG), constituted by the Joint Technical Level Boundary Committee, to examine relevant facts relating to the demarcation of the boundary alignment in the western sector, including the kalapani area, and to propose, if necessary, further measures in this regard. Two meetings of the JWG have taken place and a third meeting is likely to take place shortly. While there is no other such claim made by Nepal in the recent past, cases of local encroachments along the border do exist. These include Narasahi-Susta in Bihar and the Mechi sector in West Bengal. Such cases are examined by the Joint Technical Level India-Nepal Boundary Committee (JTLC) constituted in 1981 to coordinate work relating to inspection/restoration of missing/damaged boundary pillars and recording of encroachments.

IAEA Stand on Disarmament

*438. DR. Y. LAKSHMl PRASAD:
SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the International Atomic Eneigy Agency (IAEA) backs India's disarmament stjnd;

(b) if so, the details of their plea; and

(c) the' measures taken to further clarify India's view point in regard to nuclear tests carried out and the number of times discussed in IAEA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) At the instance of Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand, the 35-member Board of Governors of the IAEA at its meeting in Vienna from June 8-12, 1998, inserted an additional item on "Nuclear Testing" on its agenda. The summary adopted by the Chairman of the Board of Governors at the conclusion of the debate included a call on the Nuclear Weapon States to redouble their efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate their nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT and to enter into negotiations in good faith to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This is in line with India's consistent position on universal nuclear disarmament.

The Indian statement clarifying our viewpoint quoted extensively from Prime Minister's address in Parliament on 27th May, 1998. The statement also referred to the further steps taken by India towards the dejure formalisation of a moratorium, a "no-first-use" agreement, bilaterally or multilaterally, willingness to commence negotiations on FMCT and India's existing stringent export control policy. The statement added that no comrnitment or treaty with the IAEA or other international body had been violated and pointed to the deteriorating peace and security situation in our region. The fact that our concerns were not limited to South Asia was emphasised and our strong indigenous scientific and technological base and self reliance in nuclear science and technology was highlighteti. Our commitment to the global cliniination of nuclear weapons within a definite time frame w;is rcitcr-itc'i.

India opposed the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the Board on the grounds that the IAEA, whose mandate is the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy is not the appropriate forum to raise such an issue. India also pointed out that in the past Nuclear Weapon States like the U.S., U.K., and China have said that the issue of nuclear testing did not lie within the competence of the Agency.

The issue of nuclear testing was raised in the IAEA Annual General Conference in 1996 when France and China carried out nuclear tests prior to signing the CTBT. India's Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE) was also discussed in 1974 at the IAEA.

Renewal of passports of Indian citizens domiciled abroad

*439. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUG-GAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased .to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that renewal of passports of Indian citizens domiciled abroad arc not attended to for several months and in some cases even for years;

(b) what is the normal time for giving clearance to the Indian Missions abroad for renewal of the passports in the era of fax, internets and E-mails;

(c) whether it is also a fact that such delays in obtaining clearance have led to corrupt practices; and

(d) whether any enquiry has been made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a)'No, Sir.

(b) Indian diplomatic missions and posts abroad arc empowered to renew passports immediately on receipt of application for tlie same.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Docs not arise.

Damage caused by rains and floods

*440. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the PRINtE MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the States which are iiffcctcd by recent rains and floods;

(b) the extent of damage caused to lives and property, including crop in those States; and

(c) the details of the relief and rehabili tation provided to these States, State wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) According to reports received from the State Governments, some parts of the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Kerala, Mahjirashtra, Rajasthan, Sikkim and West Bengal have been affected due to heavy rains, floods, cyclone, landslides in varying degrees during the current South-Wcst Monsoon.

These natural calamities have reportedly claimed a toll of 1388 human lives and damaged 0.94 lakh hectares cropped area and 2.89 lakh houses/huts.

The State Governments are required to undertake relief and rehabilitation measures in the wake of natural calamities out of the corpus of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). The contribution to this Fund is made by the Government of India and the State Governments in the ratio of 3:1. The contribution of the Government of India is released in four equal quarterly instalments automatically. Additional assistance, if any, is provided to the State Governments from the National Fund for Calamity Relief (NFR) in the wake of calamities of rare severity according to a prescribed procedure.

The Government of India have released the first two quarterly instalments of Centre's share of CRF for the year 1998-99 to all the States. The amount